

immigrants and that it is essential for their families to be united as they come to this country so that they can achieve American success and we can all achieve the American Dream together.

That is exactly what they want to stop with the merit-based system; unless, of course, they come from Norway, then they continue to come.

We hear from the party of family values and the party of Donald Trump, who even employs his children at the White House. The Trump Organization, just think about. Here is an organization where the dad created the business, handed it down to the son. The son is now going to hand it down to his children. But they don't want immigrants to be able to do exactly the same thing and follow the same course that, apparently, has been so successful for the President of the United States.

Here is something else we learned from the Chief of Staff: when people from one party work with people from another party, that is not bipartisanship, he said. Bipartisanship, defined by General Kelly and this White House, is when people with completely different, opposite views of the world work together.

So only a Senate deal between people who believe in immigration and those who don't believe in immigration and who want to end our immigration system as it is, unless you come from Norway, that is the only way it is bipartisanship. That is like saying that if a Republican and Democrat are working together on an environmental issue, it is not bipartisanship because it is a Republican and Democrat, unless the Democrat and the Republican are persons who believe in climate change, working together with a Republican who believes that climate change is a hoax created by the Chinese.

□ 1015

Do you know what kind of legislation you get? You get nothing. You get a stalemate. You do not move the agenda forward. But that is their bipartisanship, and that is what we learned at the meeting yesterday.

Look, Democrats and Republicans are working together—Senator GRAHAM, Republican; Senator DURBIN, Democrat. They put a proposal on the table, and the President rejected it. That includes, just so that we are very clear, Democrats giving up things that are unprecedented in that Senate deal that was put on the President's desk.

Members of the Hispanic Caucus meeting with General Kelly can't fathom supporting the Senate deal. But guess what. That is bipartisanship. That is what it comes down to, which brings us to the votes this week.

Republicans might not need our help because you are the majority party, we are the minority party. But just in case you do need our help in getting a budget approved, I want you to know we are ready to stand to help you to keep the government open and to approve a budget.

But what I learned from the meeting with General Kelly, and everybody should understand, is that Democrats are more united than ever before. If you want our help on the budget, you have got to release the 800,000 DREAMers you are holding hostage. You have got to do it. Democrats aren't going to blink. We are going to stand by our values.

There comes a time that, if you say you stand for justice, you have to actually take a stand and hold it and not back down, and that is what Democrats are going to do this week. We are not going to back down.

Need our help? Release the 800,000 DREAMers you hold hostage. And guess what. We are ready to pay a handsome ransom for their release.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to direct their remarks to the Chair.

SAVE THE POLITICAL THEATER FOR ANOTHER DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BYRNE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my great frustration with my colleagues on the other side of the aisle for their reckless behavior that is threatening the safety and security of the American people.

Let me explain. Some Members of the House and Senate are holding funding for the Federal Government, including funding for our Nation's military, hostage in an effort to advance their immigration agenda.

I understand that immigration is a very important issue. I have many priorities in the immigration debate myself, like increased border security. But I understand that there will come a time and a place to debate immigration issues. That time is not now, and that place is not on a bill dealing with funding our military and other essential functions of government.

Mr. Speaker, this is what the American people hate about Congress. Instead of simply doing one of our most basic jobs, funding the government, we are having an unrelated debate about an immigration issue.

Let's be clear about what is going on here. Congressional Democrats are using our military men and women as pawns in a political game. They think they can use funding for the military as leverage to get their way on a very complex immigration issue. I think that is not only wrong. I think it is irresponsible and it has very grave consequences.

I want to strongly reject the notion that this is a Republican problem. The House passed a bill back in September, over 4 months ago, to fund the military and the entire Federal Government. That bill has been stuck in the Senate, where 60 votes are necessary to pass the bill. There are only 51 Republican Senators, so that means it will be necessary to have bipartisan support to

get any bill across the finish line. I vehemently reject this is an issue just facing congressional Republicans. Frankly, that is a lie.

So why am I so passionate about this issue? Because our Nation's military is facing a serious readiness crisis, and we as the Congress are making things worse. We have the smallest Army since before World War II, the smallest Navy since before World War I, and the smallest and oldest Air Force we have ever had.

General Daniel Allyn, vice chief of staff for the Army, put it best when he said the budgetary problems have "left the Army outranged, outgunned, and outdated. As a result, the Army risks falling behind countries like Russia and China."

There are similarly alarming quotes from the other services as well. Our military needs and demands funding certainty in order to make purchases and perform long-overdue maintenance.

Every time we pass a continuing resolution and kick the can down the road, that hurts our military. It hurts the very men and women we send into battle each day. It makes their job harder, and, frankly, it puts lives at risk.

We have seen fatal accidents aboard the USS *Fitzgerald* and USS *McCain* caused by insufficient time to train sailors and maintain ships. We have also seen fatal aviation accidents in the Marine Corps as their equipment ages and their training is limited.

The average age of Air Force aircraft is 27 years, and only 5 of 58 Army combat brigades are "ready to fight tonight."

Continuing resolutions also hurt our taxpayers. In fact, the Secretary of the Navy recently said that the lack of funding certainty has cost the Navy between \$4 billion and \$5 billion. It makes it costlier to buy military equipment, and that added cost is ultimately passed on to the taxpayer.

The threats we face today are so great. From China to Russia, to Iran, to North Korea, to terrorist groups around the globe, we haven't seen this serious a threat environment since World War II.

What makes this issue even more frustrating is that both the House and the Senate, in an overwhelmingly bipartisan manner, have passed a defense authorization bill showing our clear support for funding our military at \$700 billion. The bill passed with 356 votes in the House and on a unanimous voice vote in the Senate, yet we find ourselves at a deadlock and our government on the verge of a shutdown because congressional Democrats want to advance their immigration agenda.

Mr. Speaker, enough is enough. I know my colleagues may not like our President; I know my colleagues may not agree with me on immigration; I know my colleagues have different priorities than I do; but for goodness' sake, can we not at least agree that we

should adequately fund our troops and the Nation's military? Can we not at least agree that we shouldn't be playing political games with our military men and women? We can save the political theater for another day.

EXTEND FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH CLINICS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. PANETTA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PANETTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call upon my colleagues to set up and extend funding for community health clinics.

Community health centers are a vital resource for millions of Americans, providing more coverage at a lower cost. These healthcare providers serve our underserved communities. In rural districts like mine on the central coast of California, they are sometimes the only healthcare provider close enough for patients to receive immediate or long-term care. They provide prenatal care, annual checkups, and lifesaving screenings.

In my district, there are nine federally funded health centers serving approximately 190,000 patients from Santa Cruz to Seaside and from the Salinas Valley to San Benito County. They have dedicated staff that serve the unique and multilingual and multicultural needs of the patients in my district. Without proper funding, these vital community health centers may be forced to reduce their hours of operation, lay off staff, or even close their doors.

We must support our community health centers not just on the central coast of California, but across this Nation. These clinics, their patients, and the people we serve deserve our support. I ask Congress to support our community health clinics.

SUPPORT THE SOS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, as a father and a grandfather, I know firsthand how important it is that our Nation's children have a safe environment to grow and learn. That is why, this week, I introduced the bipartisan SOS Act.

My bill makes panic buttons available to local school systems. Response time is vitally important during emergency situations. The SOS Act provides a lifesaving technology to contact first responders immediately when an incident takes place in our schools.

Mr. Speaker, I am looking forward to building support for this commonsense bill to protect our children in the days and weeks ahead.

VICTORIA MUELLER IS A BRAVE YOUNG LADY

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a brave young lady from my district. She lives in Johnston City, Illinois. Her name is Victoria Mueller.

She is class president. She is an A student. She plays in three sports, including football. She is a member of countless school clubs and activities.

Two weeks ago, I called Victoria to let her know that she had received our nomination, as well as DICK DURBIN had called her to let her know about his nomination, for the U.S. Naval Academy.

Unfortunately, her answer was: I am sorry. I can't accept that at this time. You see, in October, I had an accident in a car and my arm was damaged severely and severed.

She has gone through a number of surgeries, but here is what she promised. She will recover from the accident; she will continue to work hard; and she will be receiving that letter and getting that nomination next year.

Her strength, her courage is something that I wanted to make sure that I brought up before this House and before this Nation as truly an inspiration, and it should be an inspiration to all of us.

I am truly inspired by Victoria's strength, her grit, and I wish her the best in her recovery. We will be praying for her.

Victoria, southern Illinois is proud of you, and this Nation is proud of you.

MARCH FOR LIFE

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak about the fact that tomorrow is the March for Life.

As a Member of this body and as a member of the body in the State of Illinois, I have always stood proud to stand up for the rights of the unborn.

We are working on and will vote to eliminate taxpayer-funded abortion through the Hyde amendment and everything as well as that goes, but also cosponsoring the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act, which is being voted on this week.

This is an issue that quite often brings controversy, Mr. Speaker. Each one of us on this floor—and no matter what our position is, I am sure there are reasons why we hold to those beliefs. Mine are my faith, but they are also experiences that I have had in life, especially when we start talking about the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act.

Fifteen years ago, Mr. Speaker, I was present when my twin granddaughters were born. They were 25½ weeks. We were hoping they would make it to 26. We lost Ellianna in the womb. Losing her caused labor to start, and then Hallie was born. We held Hallie while Hallie passed.

Now, according to some laws that are in this Nation, you should be able to abort a child at that age. Well, I can tell you that you have never held one at that age. We can sit and say: Oh, well, I don't agree with abortion.

But let me tell you something else that has taken place. I think we have a responsibility to take care of those young women who have children who might not be at the best time in their life and issues that come up.

And let me also say this. I want to talk about a group that was formed called Tender Mercies that ministers to women who have lost a child, have aborted a child, had miscarriages, all of these issues. And why do I want to talk about that? Because my daughter runs that not-for-profit to take care of the mental and physical needs that occur after something like that occurs.

It is important that we as members of the United States Congress understand that, when we stand for life, not only do we stand for life, but we also stand for those people who are in those situations, to help them through those times. We are a nation that cares. We are, as many times as we argue back and forth on this floor. Mr. Speaker, I pray that everyone on this floor on both sides of the aisle remembers that.

I thank the people who are walking tomorrow to stand for the right to life.

PASS THE DREAM ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TAYLOR). The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. ESHOO) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the 800,000 DREAMers, including the 200,000 from my home State of California.

Mr. Speaker, these young people are terrified about what will become of them if Congress doesn't live up to its promise to protect them.

There is a way to resolve this. There is a way. Congress can pass the Dream Act, which restores protection for the DREAMers. The act provides for undocumented American students who graduate from American high schools, who are of good moral character, have arrived in the United States as children, and have been in the country continuously for 4 years the opportunity to earn conditional permanent residency for 8 years.

□ 1030

That seems absolutely fair to me, and I think to so many others. Now, during that time, the student must pursue higher education, serve in the military, or work lawfully for at least 3 years.

Students who meet these conditions are granted permanent residency and the ability to one day become U.S. citizens. This is not a handout. This is not a grab by unworthy people. These are very high standards, and I think standards that U.S. citizens should meet day in and day out and don't always meet these standards, most frankly.

This is bipartisan legislation. It is supported by the faith community across our country, by businesses, by law enforcement, and by 82 percent of the American people. I think that that passes a very high standard, a very high test, and I am confident that, if the Speaker of the House would allow a vote on this legislation, it would pass today if it were brought to the floor of the House for a vote.